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ABSTRACT

One major stumbling block to the development of innovative English teachers lies in the basic design of teacher education programs. Most prospective teachers of English usually take no more than one course which deals explicitly with the methods of teaching English, while 80 to 85 percent of teacher preparation deals with content areas. The content-oriented classes are generally characterized by a limited set of teaching strategies involving lecture, discussion, and recitation. Methods instructors, when faced with the task of preparing prospective teachers in a variety of techniques and approaches, fall into the content trap by resorting to lectures. If the assumption that encountered models have the largest cumulative effect on shaping attitudes has any validity, the prospective teacher needs direct contact with teachers who use a variety of instructional strategies. (RB)

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implementation of learned concepts. For the most part, prospective teachers of English enter teacher training programs because they love literature and because they want to teach English. Most perceptive level teachers have great difficulty in applying non-subject matter specific concepts to subject oriented activities. They seem either consciously or unconsciously to resist transferring the learning of a concept in one environment to application in another. What I am suggesting here is that most prospective level teachers of English see little relevance to nor make little application of concepts governing the teaching process learned in a non-English teaching framework. If we are going to have a significant effect on our prospective teachers' attitudes, concepts and skills with respect to the teaching of English, then we must actively work with them where they are -- i.e., in the development of those attitudes, concepts and skills as they relate directly to the teaching of English.

At the University of Pittsburgh, although we are at present making some progress toward accomplishing our goals in the training of innovative and flexible teachers, we are nowhere near as successful as we could be. Although our efforts to develop a cooperative University-practicum special methods program have been consistently frustrated, we have at least been able to initiate a practicum elective course on the role of the English teacher in the school. As part of the course, students deal with such questions as: What is English? How is the English teacher? How can one observe classroom instruction systematically and how can one diagnose children's abilities, concept levels and learning styles? Outside of formal class meetings, students have an opportunity to apply and practice observation and diagnostic skills in a nearby Junior High School situation. As part of their requirements in the Foundations of Education course, our prospective English teachers spend from 2-3 hours per week on a

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A second priority is the development of the preStudent Teaching experiences lies in the attitude and approach taken in the methods classes. Augmenting the number of experiences without changing the nature of these experiences will accomplish little. If the prospective teacher continues only to hear about and talk about techniques and procedures, the probability of that teacher using these techniques and procedures actively in her teaching is negligible. What the individual finally does as a teacher is related directly to the attitudes, concepts and skills she brings to the instructional task. The methods' classes must be concerned with promoting development of the prospective teacher in all three of these areas.

A basic tenent of our English methods class at the University of Pittsburgh is that we must be the models of what we expect from our students. Although that sounds easy, I can assure you it isn't. The constant lament from our methods' class instructors is that there are so many things to do and so little time to do them. One of the ways that we have tried to avoid the problem of simply "covering" material has been to identify certain high priority attitudes, concepts and skills as central to the operation of the program. Among those in present programs are: valuing positive reinforcement approaches and being able to implement them, valuing preinstructional planning and being able to plan effectively, valuing the use of small group activities and being able to implement various kinds of small-group work in the classroom, and valuing participatory dramatics and being able to incorporate such activities as an integral part of the curriculum.

The results of our efforts to expand practicum opportunities, to provide more diverse teaching models and to promote a closer articulation between theory and practice and between content and pedagogy have been encouraging. The pre-

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